



CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
AFSA - AFL-CIO



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March 15, 2010

To: Senator Thomas Gaffey
Representative Andrew Fleishmann
And
Members of the Education Committee

From: Roch J. Girard
President

RE: CFSA Testimony n Raised Bill 440 AAC; School Districts and Teacher
Performance Programs

This bill brings clear focus on one of the major concerns we have with the RTTT Grants and its impact on our profession. We believe that the RTTT Grants is a classic example of the federal government over reaching its authority and power. It is a Draconian intrusion on public education.

This bill will identify- LABEL- a teacher or administrator as an "effective" or "highly effective" teacher or administrator predicated on student performance. We realize that the impetus for this bill comes from the absurd criteria in the RTTT Grant. The race to get \$175 Million dollars in federal money has become the new mantra: "comply with the Federal wishes or lose any chance to get this money". Now educators across the country now have to sell their souls and dignity in order to secure the federal monies.

We thought the NCLB was a "noble experiment" in education. That cookie press mentality- one size fits all was not such a noble experiment. We see where that legislation has brought this profession, for example: school closings, restructuring HQ everything so that now, some 5,000 schools are targeted for closing, and many of them are to be turned into the new God of choice, Charter Schools!

This RTTT which is a BUSINESS model approach to education e.g., push competition, take no prisoners, produce or you are out of the profession, you are not efficient, fire the teachers fire the principal, restructure the school, close the school etc. This is where federal intrusion has brought us to in 2010.

What is happening to our profession? We are allowing the corporate world mentality to take over public education.

We admit that there is room for improvement, but is destroying our profession to get a few years of money in the best interest of the profession. Accountability has never been an issue for educators. We are accountable each and every day of our lives. Labeling educators as effective or highly effective will literally BRAND educators as a simplistic he/she is good or he/she is very good. Then they are at once branded and branded based on student achievement and test scores? This sounds like another version of the NCLB!!

If we are going to be branded, the criteria used to brand us, better have the broadest criteria which best reflects the realities of the school-community being served by the teacher /administrator involved.

As professionals do we sell our collective bargaining rights, our due process rights, and contractual rights? In two to three years when there are no monies' left, and no more RTTT what are we left with? When the economic tsunami/cliff hits us all in two-three years, what does our profession look like? We will have lost our profession and our right for dollars.

To be labeled an effective- vs.-highly effective teacher/administrator, what are the criteria? Were adequate recourses in place, was parent involvement present, and were support systems in place? Being labeled is NOT a simple matter. Should a teacher or principal lose their job because they were only "effective and not highly effective", what happens to that teacher/administrator when they are forced out of their job and seek jobs in other communities? Is their labeling now going to be held against them in a new employment opportunity? What if the teacher/administrator were mislabeled due to a situation beyond their control? Where is the confidentiality in all this?

We are deeply concerned for all of our brother and sister educators. We fear for our future in that business interests seek to destroy public education as we know it. Is there a need to improve our profession? YES, but do we destroy it in order to save it?

The power brokers in D.C may think they are innovators and are doing the right thing. We ask a simple question: who says they are right, and in the final analysis, what will be left of our profession?

Thank you.